

NATIONAL RECTITUDE

THE

ONLY TRUE BASIS

OF

NATIONAL PROSPERITY:

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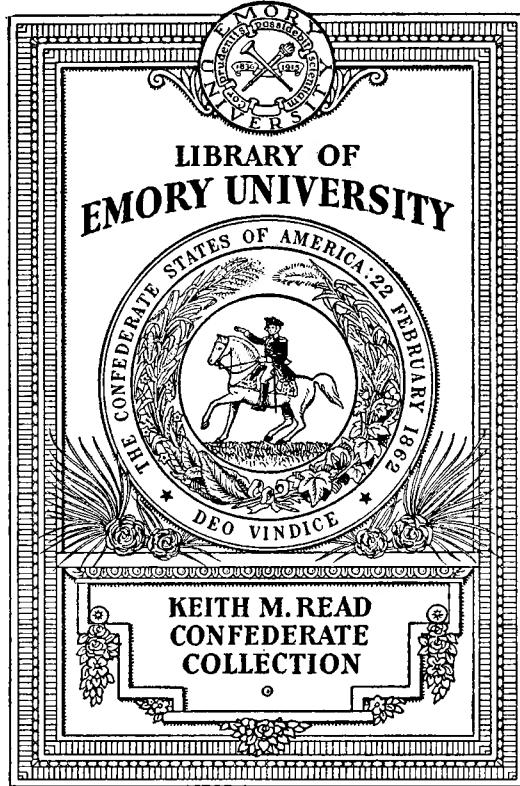
APPEAL TO THE CONFEDERATE STATES.

BY THE REV. J. C. STILES, D. D.

PETERSBURG:

EVANGELICAL TRACT SOCIETY.

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There never fell from the lips of Solomon a wiser word than this : “**RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION.**” The history and the destiny of our beloved country are bound up in this brief sentence. May God, in mercy, incline every man in these Confederate States, especially every member of the Christian church, to ponder this truth from heaven, with a severity and integrity of thought demanded by the eventful condition of the country and the world.

The invaded and oppressed condition of our people awakens a peculiar interest, at this time, in all inquiries touching national rectitude and prosperity. Nay ! God has laid his providential grasp upon our national foundations, and, by a series of public convulsions, has been shaking our social fabric to its very center for the last eighteen months. Does he not thus summon our people to respond to some such inquiries as these ? Have you built your house upon the rock ? Have you set up such a structure as is likely to survive those severe shocks which human depravity is sure to develop under the reign of absolute holiness ? Are you looking to the proper source, and trusting to the proper principles for deliverance from the sharp and perilous conflicts of the day ? In a word, are you an upright nation, breathing that spirit, walking by that rule, and seeking those ends which God requires at your hands ? Try your political foundations and defences faithfully, and see whether they are laid down so as to uphold the security, prosperity and exaltation of a righteous people.

To these inquiries, in all their range, Solomon’s proverb furnishes a glorious reply—**NATIONAL PROSPERITY IS THE FRUIT OF NATIONAL RECTITUDE.** It is **RIGHTEOUSNESS** that exalteth a nation.

WHAT IS NATIONAL RECTITUDE ? HOW DOES IT PROMOTE NATIONAL PROSPERITY ?

I. WHAT IS NATIONAL RECTITUDE?

Character pertains to three things—*motive, act and aim*. In the order of statement, these elements lead the one to the other, and transmit their moral impress—each to that which follows. By the nature of mind, therefore, all the good or evil of the motive passes so perfectly through the act to the aim, that if there is no rectitude in the *aim*, there is none in the act, none in the motive, and none in the agent. It is the decree of God's law in *nature* as well as in scripture, that rectitude in *principle* demands rectitude of *aim*. Righteousness is conformity to God in principle, agency and *aim*. It is not enough, therefore, to constitute a good man, that his feelings should seem to correspond with God's perfections, and his agency, to be governed by God's law. His *aims* must be determined by God's *purposes*.

In answer to the inquiry—What is national rectitude? we are compelled to respond, that God will never deem that nation righteous which does not come out manfully, and go to work seriously to accomplish those grand objects which he has ordained alike for the glory of the Creator and the good of the creature. But what is God's *grand aim* in the government of the world? What is the *great object* which he has proposed for the good of man?

Reflect! God made man in his own image. This was man's glory, that his nature carried the likeness of his God. Man, by apostacy, cast God out of his nature. This was man's *fall* into all disgrace and destruction. And now, glory be to God through eternal ages! God's grand end in the government of the world is this: *Man's restoration to the likeness of his Maker: Man's redemption from sin.*

This was an end hard to reach. Good to the transgressor! Every attribute of God's nature, every letter of his law, every eye to the welfare of man in accordance with the original economy, emphatically forbade the attempt.

It was an end demanding mighty expenditure. The incarnation and crucifixion of God's Son—for pardon; the descent and regeneration of God's Spirit—for purification.

And now let me say it was an end of *boundless benignity and blessing*. When the great Father looked down upon his profligate children and saw that their primeval beauty, honor, companionship and peace were all gone and gone forever; that there did not remain a solitary vestige of their

first estate, not even a relic of divine resemblance which was not transformed into the deepest curse; and, finally, when he saw that this universal bankruptcy had thrown a gloom over man's soul and prospects beyond endurance for the present or hope for the future—then, oh, then it was that God's bosom yearned over fallen man with all the compassion of the first and best of parents. Though man richly deserved what his own hand had wrought, then it was that God thought to do for fallen man what he had not done for angels when they fell. And what did he? In wisdom, love, and power he traversed a path of self-abasement, sacrifice and toil such as seraphim had never imagined, simply that he might accomplish the stupendous salvation of man. Oh, that most gracious design! That past, present and future aim of God for man! That most glorious re-construction after God! What a beam of parental wisdom conceived it! What a throb of parental love quickened it! What a struggle of parental power achieved it! What a gush of parental joy ever hails it! Hark to the beatings of the heart of God. “Come back, my son, and let me imprint a father's likeness upon you once more. Let me inclose you in your father's arms once more. Let me anoint you with a father's kiss once more. Let me administer to you the bread and wine of the father's table once more. Yes! Come and share the white robe, and the life, and the joy, and the peace, and the glory, and the throne of your elder Brother once more. Come and lie in the bosom of Jesus as close and warm as if he himself esteemed you the father's most precious gift in token of that father's unutterable admiration of his mediatorial virtue. Yes! Come and take position in your father's family as much loftier than that from which you fell as the righteousness of Jesus surpasses the merit of Gabriel. In a word, come back and sit down in your father's house, to be filled with all the fullness of God, and go no more out forever.”

Yes, my fellow-man! *reconstruction, readoption* of man's God-like, blood-bought immortality! This, this is God's grand aim in the providential government of the world. This is what God has undertaken to do for man. This, in a word, is that *supreme object*—which God commands every child of Adam, and every nation under heaven to seek instantly, and for life, and with all the heart.

Bear in mind two things. The *diligence* required of man must be *supreme*, since all subordinate seeking of the one

kingdom is an agency of the other. This *salvation by Jesus Christ*—while it enjoins the faithful performance of every worldly duty, it not only forbids any such avidity of pursuit as implies the proximate importance of the world, but demands that every enterprize and aim of life shall be prosecuted not as subordinate only, but as strictly subservient to God's grand end in the gospel. In fine, it summons our country, our whole country, to embark with all her heart and soul, in life-long co-operation with the Redeemer of the world, to work out the glory of God in the salvation of men!

In arranging the evidence of our grand national duty, it becomes us to remember that God is the one great witness of earth. On this subject he testifies in two ways: by his *word*, and by his *work*.

That national rectitude demands national consecration to the kingdom is established—

1. **By the word of God.**—Man has but two possible objects of supreme pursuit—*God* and the *world*. The very first work of life is to choose between them.

It is an instructive and decisive truth that these two great objects define each other by antithesis. They are perfectly antagonistic—in their *nature*; the one is natural—‘eat and drink,’ the other spiritual—‘within you.’ In their *elements*; the one embraces God and his people in their respective relations; the other, the world and its objects in their every variety of pursuit. In their *spirit*; tried by the heart of God or man they cannot coexist. ‘If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ So, ‘he who is born of God overcometh the world.’ In their *dignity*; the one is as nothing, the other as every thing. ‘Take no thought what ye shall eat, drink or wear, but seek ye first the kingdom.’ Indeed, the whole material universe is equally degraded in the comparison. “Behold! I make new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind.” The display of divine perfections in material creation is so feeble in comparison with the more magnificent exhibition of the same attributes in his spiritual kingdom, that the glory of the first is extinguished by the splendors of the last. Creation is nothing to redemption. It is important to know that they are antagonistic in their *influence*. The one is as injurious as the other is beneficent. Universal experience endorses the illustrious experiment of the wise man and bears testi-

mony that the world—an idol—is sure to come to vanity and vexation in the end. Universal reason teaches that, though a sensual world may refresh the appetites of the earthly part of man, she has no ministries for the more anxious cries of his higher nature. Holy writ completes the record, by assuring us that the insatiate malignity of the world, not content with the negation of all good to man, makes her every friend the enemy of God, and dooms him to perdition. Not so the kingdom. It is written—“The work of righteousness is peace, the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.” Yes! answers all Christian experience. Yes! replies every dictate of human reason and holy writ. For, though it takes a Trinity to deliver man from the cursing power of the world, the kingdom provides the salvation perfectly, by restoring man to the blessings of his first estate—gloriously. Primeval good consisted in three things—a state of *holiness, approval and sonship to God.* “Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost,” “we are made partakers of the divine nature.” Here is the first boon of Eden. “Being justified by faith,” “we have peace through his blood.” Here is the second. “I will be his God and he shall be my son.” And here is the third. Rejoice, oh man! In the kingdom of Christ is treasured up for you all possible blessing: for sanctification, is the consummation of all personal good; justification—of all good relatively to God a king; and adoption—all good relatively to God a father. Only seek first the kingdom, and what is the issue? You enroll yourself among the children and inherit all things. But seek the world as your chief end in life, and what then? You doom yourself to disappointment in time and destruction through eternity.

You expect me now to say that christianity and the world are perfect opposites in *morality*; that as objects of supreme pursuit, the one involves all good—the other all evil; and consequently that God commands men to renounce the world as their chief aim in life, and seek first the kingdom*. On this subject the teachings of scripture are beyond contradiction. How perspicuous is the utterance of Jesus! “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.” Here is the *duty*—we are to

* By this phrase—“the kingdom,” which I shall use abundantly hereafter, I need scarcely say, I mean christianity, the religion of Jesus, the church of God.

seek : and the *object*—the *kingdom* : and the *method*—*supremely*. By these few words Jesus cuts out a life's work for every child of Adam and every nation under heaven, and assures us that if we would be righteous, we must select his cause as the object of our supreme pursuit. How luminous is the prohibition of John. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” Motive fixes aim. If our country therefore, would escape the displeasure of heaven, her carnal desires must not find in the world the object of her prominent affection. How simple and luminous both the command and the prohibition in the exhortation of Paul—“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” By the positive injunction we are commanded to stir up our hearts to heavenly aims; while the negative mandate forbids our devotion to the world. The following testimony of the same apostle combines the prohibition and the command but reverses the order of statement. “And be not conformed to the world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Here, as elsewhere in his epistles, this man of God seems oppressed with the abounding worldliness of men. Doubtless occasional instances of religious devotion presented themselves to his view in every community, but the eye of the apostle seems to discover that individually, socially, and nationally in all the earth, the vast majority of men loved the things of the world, set their affections on things on the earth, and labored for the meat that perisheth. Consequently they had placed their chief *aims* in the *world* and not in the *kingdom*. Hence his exhortation. Is it not with us, in our day, very much as it was with Paul in his? Were the apostle to address our country, at this important juncture, he would probably say to us—“Overlook mankind around you. Cast your eye over by-gone generations. See how inordinately men set their hearts upon the world; and fix their aims upon the world; and spend their strength for the world. Now I charge you, ‘Be not conformed to the world.’ Feel not as they feel; aim not as they aim; work not as they work. But ‘be ye transformed.’ Let your desires be thrown beyond the world, and fixed upon objects above the world. Struggle indeed for a religious renewing of your very minds themselves. Your old man rested upon the world, your new man must rest upon the church—your first mind was earthly, your changed mind must be holy.

Thus, only by a transformed soul, a soul shifting its affections and aims from the world to the kingdom, can you reach true national rectitude, and prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. But why labor a point so patent upon the page of holy writ. In all seekings—God and his kingdom are the great object. There is no end to such scriptural injunctions as these. “Seek ye the Lord and his strength—Yea! seek his face forever more!” “Set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul.” “By patient continuance in well doing, seek after glory, and honor, and immortality and eternal life.”

My countrymen! we are just inaugurating a new nationality upon earth. What destiny shall we seek for our country in her day and generation? If we would please God and secure his blessing, surely we must become a righteous people. If we would assume the stand of a righteous nation, most surely we must renounce the world and seek first—the kingdom. I have produced one witness to the absolute necessity of this change:—the word of God. Weigh well the testimony. That the word of God demands this consecration to the kingdom, you cannot deny. That the governing claims of the word of God are positively awful—one moments candid thought will convince you.

Study its *nature*. What is the word of God? God himself expressed in language. Oh! then resist not divinity itself by resisting the word of God. Study its *elements*. All the benevolence, and all the wisdom, and all the power of God are embarked in his word. How much blessing God's heart of love can wish you! How well for blessing God's mind of wisdom can plan for you! How surely for blessing God's arm of power can work for you! Oh! then, do not surrender all the benefits of infinite kindness, counsel and strength by despising the word of God. Study its *agency*. All your good reaches you through the channel of God's word, and all your protection is furnished through the shield of the word of God. Oh! then, cross not God's word, to leave all your good behind you, and to rush beyond—where not a solitary shingle shall shelter your immortality from the righteous wrath of heaven. Study its *authority*. The word of God is—God himself ruling the material universe, perfectly; managing the affairs of this fallen world, perfectly; dispensing the rewards of virtue to the hosts in glory, per-

fectly; and exacting the dues of heaven from the damned in hell, perfectly. Oh! then rebel not against the grand governing right, the august governing power of the word of God. Finally—study its *end*. Reflect! your soul was made to go by God's word; and God's word was made to guide your soul. Fellow man! dethrone not that word which was built to govern your soul, by the deliberate counter-working of that soul which was built to be governed by it. Oh! my country! If we let go the word of God—where shall we fix our hold? If we will not permit God himself to guide us—what directory shall we set up in his place? Far, far better is the counsel of heaven. Give heed to the word of God. Seek first the kingdom of Christ. Prove thus your national rectitude—and the prosperities of a gracious and a faithful providence shall assuredly follow you.

That national rectitude demands consecration to the kingdom is established—

2. **By the work of God.**—By God's work, in this connection, I mean, his *agency* employed about the subjects of which his *word* speaks. God's word is an address to man concerning his kingdom. God's work therefore refers to the *constitution* of his kingdom and the *creation* of man. You are aware that nature's most emphatic method of expressing *intensity* is by *reiteration*. Now that God resolutely requires man to seek first his kingdom finds an impressive verification in this fact—the work of God is an actual republication of the word of God. This we shall prove, but this is not all. To the considerate interpreter, the work of God comes up as God's earnest *endorsement*, his authoritative *reiteration* of the grand substance of the gospel. His work *seals* his word. Study the bearing of this allegation upon—

1. **The constitution of the kingdom.**—I deem it hardly an extravagance to say that, to a reflective mind, God's great address to man—“Seek ye first the kingdom”—is not less clearly and perhaps more forcibly expressed in *the structure of the kingdom* than by the words of the bible. The fact is, there is not an element or an act of the kingdom, which does not, like the bible, bear independent witness that God commands all men to work supremely for the up-building of his cause. The *doctrines* of christianity clearly bear this testimony, for there is not a statement in God's word which—believed—does not tend directly to overthrow sin and promote the reign of God. The *law* of

the kingdom bears similar witness, for there is not a command which—obeyed—does not work supremely for God's glory in the suppression of sin and the saving of men. The *provisions* of the kingdom—Jesus Christ the foundation, the Holy Ghost the agent, the word of God the instrument—they never, never act but to bring man away from the world and consecrate him to the kingdom. So, too, the *ordinances*, the *promises*, and the *sanctions* of the kingdom, they literally accomplish nothing when they do not separate men from sin and the world and consecrate them to the service of God.

We insist now—if every plank of the house of God is set up to work both as a hedge against worldliness and a pressure to religious consecration, then God's peculiar structure of his kingdom is God's loud call to every human being to give up the world and struggle with him to save lost men. How could God bring up all the elements of his kingdom to work in solid phalanx for the saving of the lost and yet be willing that man, made to be good and useful, should stand by and do nothing for the rescue of his dying race? By the *desire* to save lost men, and the *planning* to save lost men, and the *power* to save lost men expressed and laid out in the structure of his kingdom, we reach the mind and will of the architect. He, who with his voice in the gospel uttered that second command—‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,’ by his hand in the construction of christianity, first, shows us, distinctly, that very neighbor in the jaws of destruction, and then summons us, imperatively, to come to the rescue and work for his deliverance. In a word, the kingdom of God is a perfect echo of the word of God, and by its very nature emphatically reiterates God's great command ‘For-sake the fascinations of the world and labor to save your dying race! .

My countrymen! Do you prize the heritage of national rectitude? Then hear the deep voice of God proceeding from the very bosom of his kingdom. By its intensely benign and holy spirit, it calls you forth to set your heart upon the gospel of Christ and live to save a dying world.

2. *The structure of man*—like the constitution of the kingdom, is substantially a re-utterance of the voice of the gospel. Every prominent faculty of man's nature, properly interpreted, would seem to have been fashioned to re-assert the great christian command—seek ye first the kingdom.

Human reason—in its rectitude—is the very word of God calling men to the work of the church. Reason is that part of the structure of man which was planned to provide light for the soul. But all light is in God.

The great *first law* of reason, therefore, commands us to look up to God for light. Thus it brings a *teachable mind* in man directly to the authoritative word of God. The recommendations of an enlightened and worthy father will always influence an intelligent and worthy son. What heed then should man give to the counsels of his maker? God's judgment is infallible—he cannot err; his truth is absolute—he cannot deceive; his benevolence is infinite—he must propose for the best. What has the world gained by scorning the suggestions of such a patron? Her bitter history, in all its dark length, but echoes God's solemn prediction—“It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps!” Surely it is the very highest dictate of reason, that a finite, fallen creature, with his all in two worlds at stake, should not follow a self-willed, blundering nature another step, but look up at once for guidance to that all-perfect Father who says—“My son! acknowledge me in all thy ways and I will direct thy paths.” What a time my countrymen to listen to the counsels of wisdom! As a people we are just setting out anew in life. How vast the interests of our grand national family! How much prosperity or adversity must be involved in the course we take! Which way shall we go? What shall we do? The future is all darkness to us, but all light to God. Only yield to the first law of reason, and with what alacrity would every element of intelligence in the land hasten to swell the animated outcry:—“Let the nation follow where God leads. For ourselves and our children let us struggle with all our hearts to accomplish the objects which God presents. Yes, let us seek first the kingdom and enroll ourselves among the righteous.”

If it is the first law of reason to go to God for light, the *second law* of reason directs us to *receive light* when it comes. Thus it brings the *authoritative word of God* directly to the teachable mind of man. Now God's proposed end—the kingdom—is the very purest light in origin, essence and operation. It accomplishes the very largest work of truth. For it determines and discharges the duty of a nation precisely, by promoting the welfare of every individual of the nation perfectly.

Man's *nature* bears testimony to this fact. God's kingdom provides for the body—"all these things;" for the soul—purification from depravity and pardon for sin; and for goth—eternal glorification. Man's *relations* complete the testimony. For the renewed soul furnishes obedience to God our sovereign, love to God our father, gratitude to God our benefactor, reliance upon Christ our saviour, and fraternity to the whole family of Adam. Thus let our country, our whole country but follow the second dictate of reason and prosecute those aims which God commands, and all the interests of our people both for time and eternity shall be admirably secured, and the high duty of the nation faithfully discharged.

My countrymen! We have reached a solemn cri-sis in our history. A great nation is about to set out in a new career in life. What objects of pursuit shall we set before us? Refuse to brace up our minds and toil for the holy blessings which God recommends; and what then? There is no alternative. We must substitute some carnal ends of our own in their stead. We must content ourselves with the successes of agriculture, or of commerce, or of military glory, or of political pre-eminence, or of some such object of time. When we have done this, and thereby set aside God's aims for our own, which one of the great interests of our people have we secured? Not their *temporal* condition; for time-things sought supremely inherit no promise from God, but are sure to incur his recorded curse. Not their *spiritual* condition, for he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God, and his spiritual prospects blasted forever. Not their high *relations* :—for to set the heart upon the world is to violate the prominent duty of every great relation we sustain to God and man. Not our noble *nature*—for by a chief end in time, with all its mighty susceptibilities, and its yet mightier divine interpositions, man's God-like immortality is sold for a mess of pottage. Stir up your thoughts and tell me. What mortal man can measure the strength with which reason remonstrates against our hesitation for an instant, at this eventful period of our history, to enter into co-partnership with God in prosecuting the high ends he has placed before us? Who is he that has nerve enough to look issues in the face and deliberately advise our noble Confederacy to trample upon the *second* great law of reason and embark in her new course regardless of the light, the saving light which God himself reveals? Think what a

freight, what a stupendous freight our good ship carries ! What life and hope ; what happiness and resources ; what privileges and obligations ; what capacities for good and evil ; what susceptibilities of weal or woe ; what in this life ; what in that which is to come ; what in us that breathe, and what in the unborn generations that are to follow ! In stolid contempt of the all-merciful direction of God, under such prodigious responsibilities, shall we as a people venture to set out under a *carnal* guidance ; and a carnal guidance which has never conducted to substantial prosperity one solitary branch of the human family, though tried by all ? Methinks I see the spirit of Reason standing before our infant nation in a most persuasive attitude. With one hand she points to the graves of national worldliness, stretching in unbroken succession all along the past quite back to the fall of man : With the other she holds up for our adoption that ever-living, all-comforting godliness which hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come. And now, with most solemn and winning accents she thus addresses us : “ Receive the light from above. Seek first the kingdom. And become a righteous people.” Oh, what a bright day would dawn upon the world, if the combined intelligence of even a majority of our people would but resolutely determine—“ never shall our gallant ship weigh her anchor, never hoist a sail until the great Pilot is at the helm who brings us the chart of heaven and steers by the light from above. Never ’till our momentous destinies are committed to his experienced, unerring direction.” Oh ! God, ruler of heaven and earth ! Permit not our country to follow the example of every by-gone family of Adam, and in her infancy doom herself to destruction by commencing her new career in practical defiance of all the reason of heaven and earth. God in mercy forbid it. We all pray forbid it !

The *third great law* of reason requires us to consult experience and study the past that we may find the heavenly direction we had failed to follow. At a period when, from the creation to the present hour, the entire race has suffered deeply through every successive generation by self direction ; at a period too when God in mercy is casting great christian enlightenment amongst the nations, who so blind and brutal as to counsel his beloved and bleeding country to perpetuate in her own bosom all the direst evils of the past by a perpetuated violation of all the great primary laws and lessons

of human reason? Rather let the wanderings and conflicts of the past lead us to rectitude and peace in the future, by following the light of heaven and seeking first the kingdom.

And now my countrymen, what say you to the argument drawn from the structure and laws of human reason? If the very *first* dictate of reason is "*follow God*," and God says "*seek ye first the kingdom*." If the *second* dictate of reason is "*receive the truth*," and we know by experience as well as by revelation that God's blessed kingdom involves all-blessing-truth. And if the *third* dictate of reason directs us to "*consult experience and study the past*," and our retrospect assures us that poor humanity has been thumping upon the breakers from the day that she usurped self direction—does there not come forth a strong voice of God to us from the very elements of rational nature, "*seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*."

Human conscience too, by its nature and action, demands our national consecration to the cause of God.

The very *structure* of conscience enthrones God in the soul as its supreme head. Thus it binds every man to seek those ends which God proposes. The argument here is not dependent upon scriptural revelation. Manifestly God is not executing his law strictly upon fallen man in this life; he is not dealing with the rebel upon the principles of absolute justice. He must then be carrying out some remedial scheme; some plan of salvation for sinners. The voice of God in *providence*, therefore, is but the echo of God's voice in the gospel, and summons every child of Adam to engage with him forthwith in his kingdom-work of saving lost men.

The primary *agency* of conscience secures a solemn *recognition of the sacred scriptures* as containing the revealed will of God to man, and of course brings home the Saviour's word "*seek ye first the kingdom*."

National acknowledgment of the christian faith, especially national worship in specific acts of humiliation, prayer and thanksgiving at the *call of Government*, concedes national obligation to obey God religiously in all things. Where then is conscience, when a nation humbles itself before God for non-conformity to his will on one point, but refuses to conform on another; when the people call upon God to do some things for them, but will not allow him to do others; when they thank him for small favors, but will not receive his gift of the kingdom as '*the good part*'— the one thing

needful? Surely there can be no more audacious outrage of a sound conscience than is perpetrated by that nation which is ever ready to engage in acts of worship at the call of an earthly magistrate, but never ready to seek first the kingdom at the command of the God of heaven. Such a nation practically insists upon a joint occupancy of the eternal throne with Jehovah himself; for they substantially decide that God shall rule them in some things, but he must submit to be ruled by them in others.

Let me now say, that the national obligation to seek the kingdom, deduced first from the *nature* and then from the *acts* of conscience, is scaled by that *innate principle* of conscience which imperatively demands that *gratitude be given to the benefactor*.

Oh the generosity of God toward man! Who can speak it? Was it right that God should strike that august angel from his splendid throne into the fiery bowels of hell forever, instantaneously on his perpetration of one sin? And that, not a sin after a Saviour had been offered to the sinner; not after the Spirit had affectionately pledged him regeneration; not after a Bible of fatherly persuasion had been placed in his hand; not after sabbaths and sanctuaries and preachers and providences, for a score of years, had struggled to bring him back to virtue; not after the Holy Ghost from heaven had actually breathed upon his soul and pressed him back toward God; not after the patience of Heaven had long waited in vain to be gracious. Oh if it was right that God should smite down that angel to bottomless perdition for one transgression undistinguished by any one of the atrocities that mark all human guilt—what then shall God do with man? Man—whose sins in multitude and variety are incalculable; whose every transgression is aggravated by the darkest features that can blacken crime; who murders the Son of God though sent to save, and vexes the Spirit of God though despatched to renew; who withstands all the ordinances of heaven and the assiduities of the Church; who grieves divine love and wearies divine patience; and who, past feeling, richly deserves, through every successive moment of life, to be left of God to the terrible doom he so obstinately covets. But does God here, too, administer justice and forthwith consign the monster to the pit? Ah see! With heaven's all-glorious heart of love and grace he hastens to execute in man's behalf christianity's wonderful

scheme of redemption. He washes away man's guilt in the blood of Jesus, and his pollution by the baptism of the Holy Ghost; he adopts man into his family on earth and builds for man a throne in heaven; at the last great day he will justify man in the presence of assembled creation and then take him home to glory and fill him with all the fulness of God forever. Oh the grace! the effulgent, matchless grace of God to man!! In all seraphic imagination, is there ought so bright and beautiful, so grand and glorious as God's wonderful love of man!! What! and are we actually inquiring whether man is bound in conscience at the call of God to enlist heartily in the glorious cause of saving his perishing fellow? Are we seriously considering whether man may not still justifiably spend his chiefest strength in planting cotton, selling goods, pleading law, seeking office, or serving self—until, through lack of his help, his perishing brother shall sink to perdition by his side, and the exhausted patience of God consign his own sordid soul to a darker doom? What is conscience? What do men mean by the word? Surely if there be any sense or justice in conscience; any love or gratitude; any conception of authority, approval of virtue, or appreciation of mighty favors and stupendous deliverance; indeed, if conscience does not express the absence of all authority, wisdom, virtue, gratitude and right, then, of a truth, we are bound to cut short this discussion and reply that, by the irresistible voice of conscience, the first duty and chief end of man is to glorify God in working to save a dying world.

My countrymen! What say you to the argument derived from the structure of man? God is the light of reason and the Lord of conscience. The nature and agency of both attest the fact. It comes then to this:—By the structure of man, reason is one divine inlet whereby God's eye comes in to see for us; and conscience another, whereby the will of God comes in to determine for us. The very formation of our nature, you perceive, proclaims that man is bound to see through God's eye, and to move by God's will. But reason sees that God says, "Seek ye first the kingdom;" and conscience feels that God commands, "Seek ye first the kingdom." I put it to you, fellow-man, if you do not seek first the kingdom, do you not break down your nature to dishonor your God? You know that national prosperity depends upon national rectitude. If you do not give your

heart to the cause of Christ, do you not abuse your nature to wrong your country? My countrymen, I commend to you a wiser, a nobler course. By a working of your faculties in accordance with the laws of their nature—*let in God*. Give heed to his word. Seek first the kingdom—and by your righteousness honor your maker, serve your country, help the world, and save your souls.

Christianity is infinitely the most splendid body of intellectual mechanism that works within the dominions of Jehovah. It is so simple and yet so sublime; so complex and yet so consistent; so diversified and yet so harmonious. Its every element is an arm working out with almighty force, and yet within, every other element is an almighty brace of the arm at work.

Our glorious christianity—the voice of God's *unbending authority* as well as of his tender mercy—how impressive is her address to our beloved country at this momentous juncture! “If ye value God's approval as a righteous people, one only course is yours. Make the CHURCH, *not the world*, your CHIEF END in life.” My countrymen, it will never, never do for us to trifle with this solemn requisition. Mark! Christianity stakes her stern demand upon her own impregnable two-fold foundation. *God's immutable word from heaven*, and *God's confirmatory work on earth*: each divine, and each by its every element, bracing itself and bracing the other beautifully, variously, perfectly. By the voice of these two infallible witnesses, let the truth be established—that national consecration must precede national acceptance. May the solemn tenor of passing providence press home upon the heart and conscience of the nation God's solemn mandate, “seek ye first the kingdom.” That word! In the beginning it comes to us as loud and clear as the voice of Jesus can give it utterance. All life long, it is echoed in the working of every constituent element of that holy church the hand of Jesus has thrown up around us. Should we turn our back both upon the bible and the church; aye! and take leave of the world itself—still Christ's solemn word shall steadily pursue us, for it has its record upon the deathless faculties of our God-like nature.

The Southern States of the once great American Union have reached a momentous epoch. They have *seceded* from the national government, thrown themselves into a *Southern Confederacy*, and are just now assuming the responsibilities

of independent nationality. Their future history, a matter of stupendous import, the God of heaven shall decide. Nay! To a great extent, he has placed our destiny in our own hands; for under the dominion of absolute justice our character must shape our history. What shall we do? If we continue to yield to that absorbing worldliness which, in all past time, has been the distinguishing characteristic of every nation under heaven, we shall surely continue to reap the never failing fruit of apostacy—unsatisfying experiences, disappointed hopes, perilous conflicts, and final abandonment. If on the contrary we would exchange these penal disquietudes for the christian promises, these fearful convulsions for the tranquillities of virtue, we stand instructed by our two witnesses—*God in his word* and *God in his work*—that we must mortify our inborn earthly appetite and seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

But do this, and it lies in the constitution of things, the course of providence, and the word of God that the dominant rectitude of heaven, in its glorious adaptation to the structure and circumstances of man, must minister an exalted tranquillity to the souls of the righteous. We confidently predict, therefore, that on that day, that happy day which records our national return to God and duty, the very first throb of the national heart shall beat out the exultant exclamation. “Verily! righteousness exalteth a nation.”

II. HOW DOES NATIONAL RECTITUDE PROMOTE NATIONAL EXALTATION.

In the beginning God made man in his own image and pronounced him accepted; and this, man’s holy character and justified state, constituted his glory. These two facts in man’s early history settle an important truth. Spiritual exaltation consists in man’s rising from the fall toward his original character and position. In other words, *righteousness* is the *principle* of exaltation.

By necessary force, righteousness works out for man—

1. *Essential exaltation.*—Man’s *intellect!* what fearful degradation it has suffered by the fall? Let down from its former almost boundless comprehension, it now confines its action to the narrow and sordid objects of earth and time. The geography of the globe, the history of her tribes, the

walks of earthly science, the ordinary occupations of industry, the indefinite variety of political developments; especially the paths to worldly fortune, the heights of human glory, the gardens of earthly pleasure, the news of the day; these and the like ordinarily constitute the field, and bound the horizon of fallen intellect. Engage now the powers of the soul in seeking first the kingdom and witness the instantaneous and wonderful change. The good man's intellect rises up to God, studies his perfections, reads his word, traverses his dominions, embraces his works, scans his government, explores his providence and pervades eternity. Now he begins to dwell upon the immortality of man, the responsibility of his soul, the beauties and beatitudes of virtue, the deformities and disquietudes of sin, the redemption of Jesus, the day of judgment, and the retributions of eternity. Who can fail to perceive that righteousness works an essential exaltation of man's intellect, by securing the illimitable range of its action and the elevated objects of its contemplation?

Man's fallen *heart*, too, how ignoble its throbings! How degraded its pursuits! Its unceasing cry to earth is, "Give! Give!" "What shall I eat, what shall I drink, and where-withal shall I be clothed?" "Who will show me any good?" "Only enrich me with the wealth of time; only bestow upon me the distinctions of the day; only conduct me to the fountains of pleasure; only assist me to improve the privileges and meet the obligations of social life; in a word, only regale my low-born lusts with the abounding ministries of earth and my exultant heart shall exclaim, "Soul! thou hast much goods, laid up for many years. Eat, drink and be merry." But the very day that dates the entrance of heaven's righteousness into that soul shall bear witness that spiritual exaltation follows in its train. Now, the heart begins to appreciate the august authority of God, the fearful apostacy of man, the claims of a glorious Saviour, the edification of the church of God, and the salvation of a world full of perishing immortalities. Now, its corruptions are gradually cleansed, its affections progressively sanctified, its powers begin to take hold of the work of the kingdom, and the whole soul is uplifted to habitual companionship with God. What enviable exaltation! Before righteousness came, that fallen heart madly ignored all this sublime world of spiritual truth and practically consented, without a shock,

to consign the entire human family to a state of everlasting and insufferable depravity and perdition. Now, that heart feeds upon the stupendous, sanctifying, comforting teachings of revelation, and in hearty love of God and man, longs and labors to elevate the human family to a state of immortal and ineffable virtue and rapture.

Conscience, too, shall enjoy her share in the universal exaltation which righteousness induces. Anterior to the entrance of holy power, conscience was dead in trespasses and sins; now, "in simplicity and godly sincerity, and not with fleshy wisdom, but by the grace of God, she has her conversation in the world."

Nor is it at all surprising that the *peace* of man's soul should undergo an improvement corresponding with the essential elevation of its moral faculties. Prior to conversion, the soul experienced that all worldly promises of happiness are vanity of vanities and vexation of spirit; but the moment christianity comes, the soul realizes the truth of heaven's record, "The work of righteousness is peace and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."

Behold the unrighteous man! How dark, sensual, injurious and disappointed! Behold the righteous! How illumined, sanctified, beneficent, and hopeful! Tell me, thoughtless fellow-creature, does not righteousness work an *essential* exaltation of every grand element in the constitution of man? Does it not illumine his intellect, and gladden his heart, and rectify his conscience, and quicken his power, and thus enoble his soul and brighten his destiny?

In like manner—by necessary force, righteousness works for man—

2. *Popular exaltation*.—I employ this term in a liberal sense to express the idea that, by the constitution of things, righteousness constrains universal mind to accord to the righteous merited praise.

All *mankind* must honor the righteous. Human nature was built to be worked in view of divine truth, obedience to the divine law, and promotion of the divine glory. Rational structure, therefore, constitutes a happy preparation both to interpret and to appreciate all human conduct conformed to God's commands and promotive of God's ends. Consequently, the moment any one nation shall separate herself from the wordly communities of the earth, take a bold stand on the Lord's side, and animated by a sincere love to God

and man, begin of a truth to seek first the kingdom and work with God to save a perishing world—all humanity is compelled to feel that such devotion to the highest interests of all—is *right*. It is reasonable, it is beautiful, it is glorious. It is just what is due to God; just what is desirable to man. It is precisely what Jesus came to accomplish, and what must revolutionize the world—gloriously. It is undeniable, you perceive, that, by the very working of moral nature, all humanity must realize that every worldly aim preferred to this devotion to God's kingdom is malignity to man and rebellion against God; while, on the contrary, the national act of consecration to God and his cause must extort the very highest honor and exaltation from all the human family.

Only let our country give heed to the voice of God and assume that national stand to which the gospel calls her, and how is it possible that any one *inhabitant of heaven*, saint, angel, cherub, or seraph should be indifferent, for an instant, to the moral glory of her new position? Such is angelic appreciation of righteousness, that there is joy in the presence of the host of heaven if but one sinner repenteth. Assemble all the mighty angels in God's presence, bid them behold a great nation, under the power of heaven's truth and a godly conscience boldly turning her back upon the worldly atheism of the race, and, throwing all their summoned power into Christ's kingdom, go to work valiantly for the conversion of the world—tell me, in every sentiment and feeling of their nature, would not these holy beings break out in strains of admiration and praise such as creature-conduct had never, never elicited before?

With reverence, may we not question whether *Jehovah* himself could be indifferent to such a spectacle. For near six thousand years he has been looking down from heaven upon the operations of the Church. He has seen many an individual of every succeeding generation abandon the world and join his people, but never, since the fall of man, has his eye rested upon a nation which did not in mass, through all its history, bow its neck to the god of this world, and bear practical testimony both against his legal and his gospel kingdom. Bear in mind, “the righteous Lord loveth righteousness.” If, within the power of a creature, there is one act whose intelligence, integrity, beneficence, and intrepidity must awaken the very highest admiration in the bosom

of the God of heaven, surely it must be that sublime movement whereby an independent, loyal people breaks from the ranks of the apostate nations of earth, assumes a public stand under the banner of the gospel, and forthwith sets to work with a sincere heart and a strong hand to co-operate with God and his church in the conversion of the world.

My countrymen ! When this war shall be brought to a close and our people sit down to deliberate upon the course they shall pursue among the nations of the earth, if by God's precious grace, we shall then and now prove ourselves a righteous people, by fixing our heart and aims upon his kingdom—methinks, while we ourselves shall irresistibly imbibe a most enrapturing inspiration from our conscious *personal* improvement, the novel and admirable spiritual nobility which we shall *display* before the eyes of a witnessing universe must rouse Heaven and Earth to look across the great gulph that divides them and shout out to each other : “ *Oh, how righteousness exalteth a nation.*”

Should our beloved country *disregard* the voice of the Almighty in scripture, structure and providence ; and *fail* to assume the stand of national rectitude ; and thus madly *bereave* herself of all the glorious blessings of *national exaltation*, reflection would pronounce her disobedience a *calamity* and a *crime* that must well nigh draw tears from heaven itself. But we will hope better things of our native land : and God helping, we will struggle to brace up her fidelity in this, the hour of her momentous decision.

OBJECTION.—Permit me, therefore, to call your undivided attention to the great *objection*, the great *temptation* of the day. Fallen nature will be sure to enroll all national delinquents under one common banner and watchword : “ **THE WORK IS IMPRACTICABLE.**” Every citizen who hears God's call and does not respond to it, will find himself controlled by some such thought as this : “ Judge man by what he is and ever has been, and we cannot bring ourselves to hope that the mass of the people will practically surrender their worldliness for christianity just now.” This conviction of *impracticability* lies in the mind of the christian in the shape of *feeble unbelief*: in the mind of many a sinner it lives in the spirit of *virulent infidelity*. I shall assail this objection in its

strong hold. May God empower me to disarm my unhappy adversary so palpably and perfectly that the visible, sensible force of heaven's truth shall inspire the conscience and the courage of the christian church to advance herself and struggle to bring up the masses, forthwith, to that national position so indispensable both to the virtue and the hope of the country.

Mark the arrogant, sneering looks and language of the infidel objector: "Divine ordinances, extending through two dispensations, have been employed with unceasing assiduity for near six thousand years to convert the world to God. And, yet, not a tithe of one solitary nation has been brought to a practical exchange of worldliness for christianity. What! That impracticable work which all the prayers and sermons of christianity and of Judaism in all time past have scarcely commenced—does this exhorter expect to accomplish by the effort of an hour? The man is beside himself?

Stay friend! This world shall surely be converted to God. The God of truth says so. Ere long, some one of her nations, by the earnest application of truth to the people and prayer to heaven, shall come out from her ranks and take a stand on the Lord's side. The God of heaven says so. Where, then, is your proof that this nation shall not come to God, and come now? Bring out your evidence. Ah! who will feel himself the unreasonable man in the last great day? He who works with God, discharges duty, uses means, and looks up with prayer and hope for the good of his country; or the man who works against God, discards all thoughts of duty, scorns all use of means, and dismisses divine assurances of good with an infidel scout?

But, you say, "means are feeble." True! But God is strong: and God has bound himself to give his strength to christian means. God has said, that the time shall come when one of his servants shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. When faith, as a grain of mustard seed, shall cast mountains into the sea. Aye! God has said that "*a nation shall be born in a day.*" In the face of this word of God, bring out your proof that this nation shall *not* be born this day. How do you know that *present means* shall not reach the *present promise*, and our nation be drawn to God under the present appeals of his providence? I say, give us your argument.

Again. Why should it seem a thing incredible to you that God should raise *this* nation from the dead and raise her *now*? A freer nation, the sun does not shine upon; and you know it, though she has never been blatant about free thought, free speech, and free soil. A nation of simpler, purer Christianity, thank God, earth does not hold, and you believe it, though she has never been as boastful as some, whose religion bears many a sad mark of corruption. Why should not God distinguish this nation, which has so decidedly distinguished herself in his behalf? A nation, whose *Chief Magistrate*, in the judgment of christian charity, you believe to be a christian; whose *Secretary of the Treasury* you believe to be a christian; whose *Attorney General* you believe to be a christian; the *Commander-in-Chief* of whose army and the *Commanders of whose army corps* you believe are christians; many of whose highest civil and military officers are accustomed to publish their christian walk at home by their feeling and solemn acknowledgment of the overruling hand of God in their official papers. Why should not God draw nigh to a people who are wont to draw nigh to him—not in the worship of established ordinances only, but you believe, quite as much as any other nation, in extraordinary religious assemblies, private and public; not by implied governmental recognition only, but whose Constitution itself approaches God with a reverence, you believe never similarly expressed by any other people; not by religious proclamations of chief magistrates only, but whose **PRESIDENT**, in the sight and hearing of all the people you know, uplifted his hands to heaven and most solemnly prayed that God in mercy would guide our beloved country in his own right way.

Do you not know, sir, that the interpretations and calculations of the soundest christian learning justify the faith that ere long the approach of the millenium must begin to show itself in appropriate premonitory changes, both in the political and the christian world? And is it not reasonable to suppose that God will inaugurate this glorious era of the church by wheeling some one nation out of the ranks of the world to take ground for God and man under the banner of the gospel? And now sir, at a period when the atrocious oppression of a powerful nation would seem to invite the interposition of God in our behalf; when he is laying his hand upon our foundations as if he would move out our

people to some new position before heaven and earth; when his eternal decree has rolled around the appointed time to call out some section of the church militant to lead the van of the returning nations; and when his Spirit seems to be educating in our people, peradventure, as adequate a preparation for this special service as any other nation possesses; tell me why should not every man who loves God or his country, to the utmost of his ability, preach, pray and work to rouse up our whole population, since move we must, to seize this one great nick of time in the history of the world and step out and occupy that national position where only the very highest rectitude, felicity and glory of heaven and earth can be reached? And why may not God be stirring up, at this very moment, just such thoughts and prayers as these in many a heart throughout the length and breadth of the land, expressly that he might reward the same and bring up our beloved country to perform that act, to discharge that duty, of all acts and duties, far the most honorable and serviceable to humanity, the most gratifying and glorifying to God? Blush, my friend, your heart harbors a brood of treacherous promptings that would strike down the men who struggle to press up our sluggish country to that position where only her highest good and safety can be found. Ah! if your infidelity were ignorance only, 'twere not so bad. 'Tis far worse than this, believe me.

Permit me now to change places with you for a moment, and summon you to assume the defensive. Confront this question in manly candor; *Does not your imaginary patriotism perish under the blow which your objection aims at my impregnable religion?*

Defend yourself against this preliminary charge. Your objection *entails* upon the country all the *great disasters* that afflict it.

The influence of the *demagogue* is one of the direst evils of our land. This man is a stranger to the noble swellings of patriotism. Personal preferment fills his heart. National aggrandizement never visits his thoughts when alone, never leaves his tongue when before the people. Whether party measures really tend to the welfare or the ruin of his country is no concern of his. Whether votes at home purchased from the weakest and the vilest by a shameless course of seduction, flattery, bribery, falsehood and dissipation,

grievously debauches society, he never stays to inquire. Party power and personal popularity ensure his election, and this, to him, is the one all-absorbing aim of life. The influence of this man, how mischievous! What political power—heads, hearts, hands—wealth, position, influence—which should have wrought for the country, is now diverted and works only for the demagogue. What a breaking down of the solid interests of the country, by mischievous measures planned and working simply to build up the sordid schemes of the demagogue. What wide-spread corruption of public morals, through a course of profligate electioneering which seeks only the personal aggrandizement of the demagogue. What peril to the foundations of the government, when the masses trained by the arts of the seducer, are ever ready to move at his will. And, finally, what a humiliating outrage, that for this atrocious demoralization of the people, this man should be allowed to stand up before heaven and earth and receive all his dignity, influence, and emolument from the very country which he bleeds to death.

The *dispensation of national office to the assiduity of the seeker*, is another pestilent evil of the times. Intelligence, integrity and patriotism are the only competent, the only legitimate governing elements of community. But merit is usually modest, and by our principle of distribution, largely excluded from those important positions which she alone is qualified to fill. What is the issue? In all the civil and military departments of the government, you may see numberless incompetent officers mismanaging important affairs of the nation, while on every hand you behold men admirably adapted to serve the country, and ever ready to do so when access to office ceases to require an indelicate forwardness to which they cannot stoop. Nor is unlimited damage to the solid interests of the country the only mischief in the case. By this method of dispensing her patronage, the nation gives the very largest bounty in her power to the education of all sorts of immodesty, forwardness, assumption, and practical depreciation of superiors. It develops an egregious pride, a vulgar coarseness, a brainless, brazen, sordid conceit which throws itself upon the country in some such spirit as this:—“I insist that the public shall employ and reward me to mismanage their affairs, although, hard by, stand all competent agents who, for the very same compensation, will transact their business to their perfect satisfaction.”

The *infernal greed* of the *speculator*, I need not say is an enormous evil in society. One year ago, from the mouth of a plain Loudoun farmer, there fell a sentiment upon my heart, which has ever since been enshrined there as one of the most simple and beautiful humanities that has visited my thoughts during the war. The spirit and word of the good man was substantially this: "I am unaccustomed to public address, and pretend to no influence over men, but I have said to my neighbors—at such a time as this no man wishes to make money; we shall all be content if we can save our country and carry our poor comfortably through the struggle. At half-price for our products, we can live and hold our own. Now to assist our government and our poor, let us make this solemn agreement with each other—that we will sell our grain, stock and manufactures at half-price as long as the war shall last." If all our people had only felt, appreciated, and practiced this noble suggestion, the intelligence, dignity, self-denial and patriotism of such a procedure, recorded upon the page of history, would have reflected as high a degree of moral glory upon the nation as the sum total of the brightest feats of her military prowess and heroism. And surely this is the day for high-souled promptings. Never in the history of man was the very purest spirit of liberty called to contend against a more shameless, malignant, cruel, and powerful aggression. And never did an invaded country meet the responsibilities of such a crisis more nobly. Witness on every hand the lavish exhibition of the most delicate and exalted virtues. What beautiful patriotism, unshrinking self-denial, generous consecration, firm endurance, and manly valor. Witness the sacred loyalty and munificent contributions of our men; the buoyant spirit and gallant enlistment of our youth; the unfailing sympathy, unceasing labors, and unconquerable heroism of our women; the uncomplaining losses and hardships of our territories overrun; the cheerful endurance of wearisome marches, sore privations, and sharper fightings of our soldiers; the multiplied unrelieved yet patient sufferings of the sick and the wounded; and the tears of our host of bereaved ones at home wiped away by the animating thought that the lives of their treasured dead were consecrated to the cause of the country. Well had it been for us if such had been the universal development of Southern character; and reasonably might

we have expected it. For if ever a combination of extraordinary providential coincidences did summon all sordid and niggardly feelings, all base hankerings after money to disappear forthwith and forever from any field of human agency, that summons, loud and imperative, has been uttered upon the field where our beloved country battles desperately for her independence. But it is painful to know that the same political crisis which demands the forthcoming of the very loftiest virtue, opens the way for the development of the most prodigious meanness; and yet more painful to be compelled to confess that Southern human nature, like the nature of fallen man everywhere, has seized the occasion of our country's misfortunes to crop out in the very darkest shades of human depravity. Oh! the speculator! the speculator! He can survey this whole scene—he can dwell upon the sad condition of his country, and the glad consecration of his fellows, and yet the very first thought of high-souled love of country shall never reach his mind—the very first feeling of sacrifice for liberty shall never touch his heart. A citizen, he is a stranger to the very first breathing of sympathy with a patriot people struggling for their rights. Equally wronged with his fellow-citizens, he has never felt the very first stirrings of virtuous resistance to grievous oppression. Yes! In the very bosom of this great nation, whose masses all-absorbed and boiling over with an intense concern for public honor and safety which indignantly scorns every private consideration—there stands the speculator, all-dead to the fate of his country absolutely struggling for life, but all-intent, not simply upon making his fortune out of her calamities, but upon making a great fortune which can be reached only by steadily augmenting his country's perilous extremities. Miserable man! How could he escape the all-pervading, generous patriotism of the day, and incarcerate his soul in such a cell of enormous degradation! The process is simple. His avaricious heart discovered that in our country, the regular supply of merchantable commodities which always keeps down the price, was cut off by the war, while the consumption of the same was as steady and undiminished as ever. Consequently a steadily increasing demand must as steadily augment the price. Let him then monopolize a large portion of necessary goods at their present value and hold over; ere long he must receive one, two, five, ten hundred per cent. upon his money,

and ultimately make his fortune. Just there the man anchored his heart, his whole heart. This crisis of his country ! What a nick of time for *accumulation* ! How soon he must become a man of fortune, of enormous fortune ! And oh the luxuries, and the power, and the pride, and the fame, and the rest of magnificent possessions !! Over and over again he turns the absorbing subject in his thoughts in ever new and more enchanting lights—until he has churned up an *egregious yearning of the bowels after filthy lucre*. Nothing else does he see, or feel, or live for. Forthwith he betakes himself to his work with enormous greed. But stay ! If there are no natural there are many *moral* obstacles to the success of his enterprise. A host of virtuous principles encircle that coveted fortune on every hand, which not only forbid accumulation under the circumstances, but every one of which must be violated, crushed, and cast aside before he can hope to reach his object. What will he do ? Behold that great, hungry shark of the ocean ! In the wake of the great ship he has scented the flesh and blood of the bait, and have it he will. He reaches the bullock's head, but teeth, bones and horns are in his way. What cares he ? Unchecked for an instant he opens his prodigious jaws and down go teeth, bones, horns and all. So exactly with our great land shark. The shining bait before him he will seize and nothing, nothing shall prevent him. But see ! self-respect and social standing and decency—they all lie in his way. If either of them survives, that fortune is not his. Nay ! he cannot commence his hoarding. Mark the speculator ! He halts not an instant, but forthwith extends his voracious mouth and crushes and devours them all, and drives on his fell pursuit. More formidable hindrances spring up to embarrass his progress. Honesty, and patriotism, and private subsistence, and public power, and national prosperity confront him and frown upon his infamous attempt. Even these do not daunt his greedy covetousness for a moment. One and all he promptly assails, and wounds and throws aside. Wretched man ! his fearful work of crushing human weal and heaven's law magnifies upon him at every move. Nothing now short of the most audacious and inhuman spirit can nerve him to another step. For if the fraternity which he leads are still determined to press on their scheme of unprincipled, heartless, reckless acquisition—ever rising prices, and ever falling and failing currency must, ere long, embar-

rass every fiscal measure of the legislator, cripple every wheel of the Government, cut off supplies from every national agent, enfeeble every movement of the army, convulse the masses with dread anxiety about their daily bread, crowd the mansions of the rich with the cries of the famishing poor, and wake up the darkest apprehensions touching the ultimate issues of the country's struggle. But what of all this? It is nothing, nothing to the speculator. His whole heart is immovably fixed. He sees nothing, feels nothing aside from his one all-glorious purpose—he and his must wallow in wealth if his country goes to the wall. On, therefore, he presses his nefarious work. On too come the terrible responsibilities of the workman. For the day approaches when it would seem that his atrocious operation, by necessary consequence, must ultimately cast our beloved country under the iron heel of the despot, and liberty and hope and all be crushed out forever. And does the speculator's personal acceleration of this most horrid catastrophe exercise no relaxing influence upon the enormous greed, the tenacious grasp of his soul? And can he stand the diabolical thought of personal elevation upon his country's downfall? And can he calmly look upon all the degradations and distresses of Northern subjugation suffered through following generations by Southern men, women and children, and *feel* no relenting pulsation? *Feel* indeed! This man is past feeling. In the spiritual world, it is well known that cherished covetousness has made a very *monster* of him. It has killed out all the humanities of his heart, and locked up every sensibility of his soul in the lustre of anticipated affluence. Depend upon it, that man has heard the music of the voice of the great seducer. "Only partake of this forbidden fruit and you shall be *as God*." The infernal spell holds him. In that grand estate, worlds of satisfaction, floods of honor, and never, never ceasing rest ever flash before him. The only world he lives to, revolves within the broad boundaries of that imaginary fortune. All else to him is unreal. An angry God is a picture; a gasping country is a dream; blasted character, a disgraced family, coming retribution, all, all, to him are harmless shadows. There is no deed of darkness which the soul of the accomplished speculator is not primed and charged to accomplish. That miserable man! At such a time as this! Yes, at such a time as this, he can feed and fatten upon the tasked sinews of the government,

upon the struggling liberties of the people, upon the scanty wages of the soldier, upon the failing morsels of the poor, upon the last solace of the sick, the wounded and the bereaved, and *feel nothing*. He can ponder all the brutal, crushing cruelties of Northern subjugation, and dwell upon all the swelling, bursting, maddening endurances, *endurances* of the Southern captive, and yet *feel nothing*. The spirit of the South ; that most beautiful, genial, admirable element of our national heritage—that Southern spirit, so brave, generous, proud and independent—he can look forth into the future and see that spirit, that noble spirit, by most unholy persecution, crushed out of the people and lying a cold corpse over all these hills and valleys where once it lived so vigorous and happy an existence; *yes, and feel nothing*. Oh, yes ! That fellow-man ! He can gaze upon all this heart-rending spectacle and feel nothing, nothing but the splendors of that fortune he sucks out of the last drop of his country's blood. The love of *money*—oh ! the *love* of *money* ! Well saith scripture, it is the root of all evil. Look out speculator ! Yet a little while and that love of *money* shall pierce thee through with many sorrows and drown thy soul in perdition and destruction !

Many are the national evils which we brought with us when we swarmed out of the great American hive, a few months ago. I have briefly laid before you three specifications of the same. My friend, I summon you now to come forth and do your work. You object to the advanced christianity I have so strongly commended to my country at this time. Without the aid of that very christianity I challenge you to deliver our country from these inherent, crying evils if you can.

The baleful power of the demagogue—what will you do with this ? The first step in the process of recovery requires a *modification* of the *law of universal suffrage*. For the weal of the world, on *Southern* soil, never, never let the natural rights of man be disputed. But let constitutions and laws discourse as they may, that there exists no such *inalienable* right as *universal* suffrage, our social degradation loudly proclaims. There is a class of men *intellectually* incompetent to vote. They are so exceedingly imbecile and ignorant that they cannot trace the bearing of the most common political measure upon the interests of the country ; and are equally incapable to sit in

judgment either upon the requisite qualifications for exalted office, or the comparative capacities of opposing candidates. Utterly incompetent to manage their own affairs, what capacity have they to govern the country ? Until a higher condition of society better trains them, such men will always be the tools of the vicious. Clearly their proper, present national position is submission—not sovereignty. There is a larger class of our people, for lack of moral principle, totally disqualified to be entrusted with the responsibilities of suffrage. At every election they sell their votes for money, whiskey, flattery, anything, nothing, and often without concealment, to the highest bidder. Many of them are base enough to allow themselves to be penned over night, around a barrel of whisky, by a file of men who prevent their escape and march them up to the polls in the morning in a body, because the demagogue is too cunning to expose their unreliability for one moment to the counter-bribery of his adversary. They place their noses between the fingers of the demagogue to be screwed up and wheeled about at his will. Out upon such insufferable abomination !! The sun hath shown upon it too long. Suffrage belongs only to patriotism and should be employed only to call out and combine the strength of the country for good; by these men suffrage is sold to corruption, and works only popular distraction and national weakness. Such men surely have not the very slightest shadow of a right to shape government for themselves or others. Clearly their proper national position is subjection not sovereignty. You have observed, doubtless, that the power of the demagogue lies in the intellectual and moral incompetency of these two classes of population; nor can his power be destroyed, nor indeed can the experiment of self government by the people be fairly made, until some just and proper limit be affixed to the right of suffrage. But, sir; dare you rise up in any community in our country and make a proposal to limit this so-called right ? Do you not know, in the *present state of society*, that every such attempt will not only be perfectly abortive, but the indignant demagogue and his dupes would forthwith bury you in a political grave that shall never know a resurrection ?

Excessive office-hunting and its mischiefs. What will you do with this ? There are men who run about, not so much to obtain endorsement of their self-sufficiency, as to carry out their determination, competent or incompetent, to secure

office; men who think a great deal more of what they are to get from the government, than what the government is to get from them. The very first step toward reformation here is to bring the community to see and to decide that such coarse and sordid assiduity to obtain government appointments is *prima facia* evidence of the official unfitness of the seeker. But, I put it to you, *in the present state of morals in the country*, will you dare to stand out and proclaim any such doctrine as this? Do you not know, sir, that the great army of office-hunters in the land would raise a clamor which would not only drown your voice and crush your effort instantly, but imprint upon your forehead a brand of political reprobacy that would be buried in the coffin that held your mortal remains?

And the *extortioner*. How will you rid society of his profligate and pernicious influence? He hides himself behind the popular maxims of political economy. An article is always worth what it will bring; and trade is its own and its only proper regulator. *In the present moral condition of society*, can you drive him from his hiding-place? Have you not tried to rout him and failed?

I have charged the objector with entailing upon the community the afflictions which oppress it. One great truth closes all debate upon this subject. It is this: If you would command an effect, you must lay your hand upon the cause. He who would kill a tree by stripping off its leaves aims a blow at the foundations of God's natural kingdom. For spare the tree, and vegetable laws will certainly re-produce the leaves. If you would destroy the fruit, nature says, lay your axe to the root of the tree. You are perfectly aware that the standing crimes of a community are but the natural out-cropping of its moral character—the mere standard of its moral tone. Crush the crime, and the spared character will be sure to express itself in similar developments. All attempts, therefore, to correct the vicious practices of society, without reforming its vicious principles, without elevating its moral tone, are *simply preposterous*.

Now, my friend, I propose to improve the character of the people; to introduce a higher moral tone in society. By the aid of God's spirit and word, God's agent and instrument, I propose that we all struggle to bring back our people from worldliness to christianity; that we persuade our country to become a righteous nation by fixing our hearts

upon those spiritual objects which would assuredly work a deeper sanctification. Thus, you perceive, I strike at the root of the evil. I command the effect by controlling the cause. And do you not see, sir, if our people would but give heed to the command of God, abandon their former low ambition to satisfy themselves with some form of secular prosperity, study to quit themselves like men redeemed, and stir up their souls to the holy aspiration of becoming the very first nation under heaven that ever stepped out of the ranks of broad rebellion to work with God to save a dying world; do you not see, sir, that a people seeking such an eminently holy object could not endure, for an instant, the prevailing crimes of society? That such a people must cast a convicting light, fix a determined frown and wield a reclaiming power upon all surrounding depravities? Do you not see that so strong a religious conscience, example and utterance in society must condemn, shame and overcome popular debasement, largely, in proportion to the degree of its own comparative moral elevation; and, *therefore*, that the *demagogue, office hunter and extortioner*, stripped of their former countenance, co-operation and power, must forthwith come back toward virtue, or fly away before the indignant scorn of a holy community and hide themselves in the obscure corners and impotent circles of society? But mark, sir, if you please. You *object* to my proposal, that our country should seize this favorable juncture and struggle up to a higher standard of christian virtue. I put it to the history of man, the constitution of things, the word of God, and your own intelligence and candor, do you not *shelter* all the causes of our national calamities? Do you not *keep at work*, in full force, all the powers that afflict the country? Do you not *accuse* your native land by dooming her to the eternal endurance of the degradations and distresses which she feels she has already borne too long?

But I have a more serious accusation to table against you. I charge you with *placing your country's neck upon the executioner's block*. God rules this world, and rules it by one thought—reconstruction after God. In itself considered, I apprehend God takes very little interest in any form of a nation's worldly prosperity. Redemption is the great order of the day here. Creation itself, heaven feels, is nothing to redemption. Whatever, therefore, promotes God's great work, he will employ—whatever does not co-operate there-

with, he will reject. Where are all the nations of the earth that have sprung up and flourished since the fall of man? Rome and Greece, and Babylon and Egypt—and the thousands that the sun hath shone upon—where are they? Historians tell you. This people yielded themselves to all the indulgencies of luxurious life. Thus they gradually declined and disappeared. That nation, animated by an over-leaping ambition for military glory, was first reduced to a state of provincial subjection and ultimately lost its identity. Short-sighted man! How vast his wanderings when he looks away from the heavenly compass! These men mistake the process for the power, the means for the mind, the instrument for the agent. These nations, all-absorbed in objects of their own, did not come up to the help of God in his one great enterprize on earth. He had no use for them. He gave them their day and then dismissed them from the scene of action. An immutable God is just as singly engaged now in his great purpose of converting the world as he ever was. Rest assured of this—every practice, principle *and people* that will not work into a saved world, God, in due time, will work out of the world he means to save. Bear in mind, God is no more a respecter of nations than he is of persons. “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish.” There is no alternative, therefore. If, like yourself, *this nation*, literally or practically, *objects to the doctrine I preach*—and shall refuse to come up and co-operate in the world’s conversion, God will give her her day, and then dismiss her from that theatre which he has determined to overspread thoroughly with the triumphs of his kingdom. Now, sir, I put it to you—does not your objection doom your country to an inglorious end? Have you not deliberately roped your native land for the gallows?

My fellow man! You and I are friends. All the sympathies, harmonies, and unities of earth cannot make up such a bond as connects you and me. God himself is the link. You and I are one in God, our common Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, Redeemer. Oh then, here, in the presence of him who made us, tell me! Is not this the truth between us! By your objection, you aim a blow at my religion, which rebounds, and not only buries your imaginary patriotism, but exposes your *real attitude*—doubtless unconscious—nevertheless your *real attitude* of more than Federal hostility to our common country? “Your patriotism!!” Bear

with me, fellow man—judged by its purity or its sense, I would not give one ounce of the patriotism of this paper for all the patriotism of all the political sceptics of time! No, Sir! God bless you! but you do *not know*, what the good of the country is: and you are *no friend* of it.

One word more with you, my friend, and I have done. No matter what appeal is addressed to your intellect, I apprehend the dogged scepticism of your heart will fall back toward your first position and work out in some such thoughts as these—“a wise Legislature, a faithful Executive and a strong army—in the nature of things, this is the power and the only power which can speak our beloved country out of her stupendous embarrassments into honorable independence.” As to this appeal, you deem it absolute inefficiency. . In its nature, you consider it pure abstraction; in its origin, christian training; and in its exhibition, ordinary religious cant. There is, therefore, in this effort—there can be, you say—*no power*—none at all, to help the country.

What!! No power *in righteousness*? Under the reign of a *righteous* God? Who says he *loves* the righteous? Aye! And pledges all his power to *righteousness only*? Friend! There is power no where else, believe me! Ah, how little, how very little you know about this whole subject! If you will condescend to be a pupil for a brief space, I am vain enough to think that I can teach you a few lessons that might render you valuable service.

Let me tell you, then, that the *power of God's philanthropy* is absolutely amazing. Shut up God's philanthropy in the heart of ten thousand worlds: to get out and serve man, it would burst them all instantly, and easily. It has executed an infinitely more stupendous achievement. How sublimely does man's *sin* confine God's love of man, by the very working of his own perfections! Infinite goodness walls it round; infinite holiness shuts it in; infinite justice bars it up; infinite truth holds it down; in finite firmness chains it fast. But God's philanthropy! Oh it wrought! It wrought! And, by the blood of his Son, it burst its way through these stupendous confinements and came to earth to save.

The consequent *power of man's righteousness* upon the *arm of God*, must be just as inconceivably astounding. My friend! Where you sit, as you are, let the minutest particle of heavenly rectitude enter your heart this moment, and this moment shall record God's rush from heaven and salvation of

your soul. Yes, indeed! If I know anything of Holy Writ, such is the power of righteousness, that I can hardly understand how a solitary child of Adam could, finally perish, who ever cherished in his soul, at any moment of life, the very feeblest emotion of true love to the God that made him! Now, if the very slightest element of gospel rectitude, in one mind, exerts such a mighty influence upon God, how can a nation's return to holiness, be impotent? My friend! Only give teachable audience to creation's three great witnesses and I underwrite—that their combined testimony shall infix upon your soul an imperishable conviction of the boundless influence of creature-rectitude over the creator's power.

1. The very face of *God's bible* reflects the doctrine with undeniable authority. God's book is full of promises. These promises are pledges of power, of all sorts of power: over body and soul; over time and eternity; over heaven, earth and hell. Fix your attention upon this indisputable yet all-decisive fact. Every one of these promises of the bible is made to *righteousness*. Bible promises are made to the christian virtues—to love, faith, humility, holiness, etc.; and to christian duties—repentance, prayer, obedience, consideration, etc.; and to nothing else. Thus, from beginning to end, the good book abounds in superlative declarations of the influence of man's righteousness to evoke God's power. So true is this, that if a man were to request you to describe the bible by a convenient phrase—you would be very apt to style it, "The book of the pledges of God's power to man's righteousness;" or "The book of the influence of man's righteousness upon the power of God." The fact is—it comes precisely to this: to *believe* the bible and yet *deny* that the nation which returns to God secures divine power is simply *impossible*. One only alternative is left you, my friend—give up your objection, or christianity. Even then you do not escape, for—

2. The tenor of *God's providence* establishes the doctrine with irresistible clearness. Wherever upon God's broad earth, a human being or a company of them has sought Divine interposition with some appreciable advance in personal piety, or the presence of the Holy Ghost—it will be found at the last great day, that *invariably*, the arm of God was stretched out in response to the call of human rectitude; that *ordinarily*, observation and experience attested the cotemporaneous working presence of God; and that *often*, *very often*

surrounding community has been irradiated, amazed and awed by the refreshing, sanctifying, saving blessings of his gracious power.

But you say—fallible man is a very unreliable expositor of God's providence. Then let God's more reliable record respond to your own pertinent enquiries.

Would you know what God says of the power of *one man's* righteousness in securing his interposition? David was a good man. When oppressed, he called upon God for help. Scripture intimates that God was angry. A smoke went up out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured. The Lord thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice. Then the earth shook and trembled, the channels of the great deep were discovered, and the foundations of the world laid bare. God rode upon a cherub, and flew upon the wings of the wind, and bowed his heavens and came down. Upon the enemies of David, he breathed hailstones and coals of fire and terrified them. He sent forth his arrows and scattered them. He shot out his lightnings and discomfitted them. He came. He took David. He delivered him from his strong enemy! Behold the power from heaven which the rectitude of one man can bring down. The scriptures, you are aware, are full of similar illustrations.

Do you inquire as to God's testimony touching the power of a righteous *community*? Judah and her king had erred in the days of Jehoshaphat; nevertheless, she sought deliverance from hostile nations which had advanced upon her with a combination of military strength, she was not prepared to resist. The secret of her wonderful success lay in one fact. Jehoshaphat and the accessible population round about Jerusalem, through humiliation and confession, truly returned to God's love and service. This was clearly exhibited in the faith, fasting, prayer, praise, and christian songs with which, at God's command, they marched down, unarmed, to meet the powerful enemy now near at hand. Oh! what an act of awful power!! Its like has no record in time. Judah's return to God in righteousness had not left one breath in a solitary soldier of the combined armies of the five nations of the earth. See the power of a righteous community over the arm of God. One illustration for many.

Have you now a desire to learn what would be the influence in heaven of a *righteous nation*? Shame to humanity! Such a people have never been found upon earth. In ancient

days there was, however, some approximation thereto. Israel of old was the *type* of a holy nation. She represented precisely the character we so earnestly commend to our country. She stood for the people who renounced the world and returned to God. And, oh! The power; the august, the wonderful, the adorable power, *represented* righteousness did induce the great God to display on this earth!! Simply because Isreal stood for a righteous people, what an arm, I say, God did stretch out in her behalf. He plagued nations, divided seas, rocked mountains, drowned armies, chased them with thunder, scared them with visions, slew them with prayers! He brought down his throne from heaven to earth and became a temporal king; preached to assembled nations from mountain summits; made the raiment of his people withstand the elements for forty years; baked their bread in heaven near half a century; and commanded the rocks and sands of the wilderness to slake their thirst. He established telegraphic communication between heaven and earth; appointed a great pillar captain of Israel to march before the host among the nations; baled out rivers when they crossed their path, and arrested the sun in his course when further light was necessary to complete a victory. Lo! These are parts of his ways. And how beautifully God's overshadowing presence sprang up to the fancy of Moses. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead Jacob and there was no strange God with him." "For ask now of the days that are past which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon earth, and ask from one side heaven to the other, whether there has been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?"

Let me say here, that to do justice to the argument, we must appreciate one most important fact. Signal and wonderful as were these displays of Almighty power, they constitute no adequate expression of the interest which God will take in a *truly righteous nation*. Israel of old, we repeat, was but the *type* of such a people. Personally, God's economy separated her from the nations of the earth; practically, she never abandoned the ways of the nations; formally, she professed to serve the kingdom of God; spiritually, she served the kingdom of the world. Be pleased now to observe if all these mighty displays were made in behalf of

Israel while opposing the true people of God in principle, and simply because she represented them by appointment, how much more wonderful will be the patronage which a holy God will assuredly throw over that *righteous nation*, which in principle and practice, as well as in form and profession, comes out from the world and takes position on his side? For if God stretched out such a mighty arm in the deliverance of David, an individual, simply because he was righteous; if he put forth a yet more signal display in behalf of Judah, a fragment of Israel, simply because she returned to duty; and if for generations, he moved before the whole earth in the very grandest exhibitions of power in patronizing Israel, and this simply because she stood forth the emblem of a holy nation—Say! what imagination will dare attempt the conception of that love of God's heart which shall welcome, and that embrace of God's arms which shall protect that first and only nation of earth and time that heartily comes out from the world and gives herself to God? Oh! the love and *power* of the Almighty vouchsafed to a *righteous* people!! No wonder the prophet sings:—“Thou art a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land be called desolate. But thou shalt be called Hepsibah, and thy land Beulah. For the Lord delighteth in thee and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the *bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride*, so **SHALL THY GOD REJOICE OVER THEE.**”

My friend, the *power* of righteousness, divine *revelation* pronounces, and divine *providence* exhibits, but neither the one nor the other *makes* the power of righteousness.

3. *God in person.*—God by his *very nature*, it is, that *originates and seals* this power. Righteousness is *consecration* to God. Now the nature and bearing of this act, I might almost say, forces the nature and bearing of God himself to stand by and prosper the agent. Behold its *virtue*! To enter heartily into the sympathies and work of the father, to give yourself to your parent, is the whole duty, the very perfection of a child. Mark if you please! Consecration meets every claim both of the nature and the agency of God, perfectly. The sum of all rectitude, no wonder consecration to the kingdom is the one great duty to which God has ever called the nations of the earth: Behold its *value*! Con-

secration secures all the great ends of heaven and earth. It harmonizes creator and creature; it inaugurates the millennium; it consummates the conversion of the world, and the glory of its maker. Behold its *beauty*! Consecration is so self-denied and so just; so whole-hearted and yet so self-governed; so intrepid and yet so confiding. Now if the eyes of God embrace, in the act of consecration, every element of excellence, usefulness and beauty, how is it possible that any other object should commensurately attract his admiration or enlist his power? And surely, if our beloved country should distinguish herself above all the nations of earth and time, by being the very first to assume this most just and honorable stand of heavenly loyalty, his every word, purpose and perfection, assures us that a righteous and a faithful God would vouchsafe to such unparalleled fidelity, the most stupendous displays of his delivering, prospering power. We feel justified, therefore, in pressing the triumphant enquiry:—Does not the nature, spirit and bearing of the very act of national consecration imperatively demand; that if God ever exerts his power for the good of his creatures, he should reserve its sublimest energies to secure the happy exaltation of that people, who, in christian independence, take the lead in breaking those infernal chains, which have held fast all prior generations in servile bondage to the god of this world?

“*No power*” in such a move, did you say? No *POWER*? Why sir, if there should be current among our people at large some sincerity of desire to come back to God and work for his kingdom, most certainly if our people should move up strongly to the great christian stand, I do not believe, since God made the world, that there has ever wrought amongst men *such a power* as that national act would of moral necessity enlist.

Mark its bearing upon our *secular relations*. Its *protective* interposition would be glorious. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” “The rod of the wicked shall not rest on the lot of the righteous.”

In the matter of this *Northern invasion*, I solemnly believe that the christian attitude of our people would be worth more in our defence than all the Potomac armies that could stand upon the face of the earth! More, I say, than all the Potomac armies that could be marshalled up on the face of the

earth. What! Do you suppose, for one instant, that our God, who rules the world to save it, and fills the scriptures with superlative assurances of his fatherly protection of the righteous, would sacrifice both his great principle and his great object by suffering the only nation that abets his great cause to be overthrown by those who oppose it? Never, sir! never! never! until his *omnipotence* is *exhausted*, and his *immutability* has *perished*. Oh! how far you live from the light! Why sir! Let the North march out her million of men on the *left*; and array upon the *right*, all the veteran troops of England and of France, of Russia and of Austria; and bring up the very gates of hell, in all their strength, to compose the *center* of her grand invading army. What then? Why every thing in God and from God assures us that these Confederate States would hear a voice from heaven—"The *battle* is not your's but *MINE*." "Stand ye still and see the *salvation of the Lord*." If they dared to advance one step, a righteous and an angry God would fire off upon the aliens terrible thunders that angel ears never heard, and shoot out upon them vengeful lightnings that cherubic vision never saw, and fling down upon them cataracts of angry power that hell herself never felt, and if necessary to our deliverance, would shake the very earth from under their feet, and scatter them to creation's ends or bury them in the fathomless depths of the pit. Nor do I entertain the shadow of a doubt, that the day which records the national rectitude of these Confederate States shall find those despotic nations, on both sides of the great waters, so loth to come to the recognition of our national equality with themselves, most heartily ready to approach us in the attitude of the profoundest obeisance. For "they that afflicted thee shall come *bending* unto thee, and those that *despised* thee shall *bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet*."

Nor are the blessings of national rectitude confined to mere protection. If righteousness exalts a nation, her entire moral and social condition would hasten to bear witness that crimes and sorrows, wars and rumors of wars, and all the associated ills of society were rapidly disappearing; while industry, prosperity, benevolence, and peace at home, and general respect, admiration, and emulation abroad combine to indicate that universal amelioration our return to God had induced.

And if our national christianity brings the *God of provi-*

dence to stand by our secular interests so vigorously, what think you will the God of *the church* do for our religious welfare? Most admirably does it fall in with his own great perfections, predictions, promises and purposes, by the sanctifications of his grace, to lead along his faithful people in a yet more triumphant course of spiritual prosperity. That precious blood of the Cross, so long trampled under foot by the masses of our people, by those masses shall, ere long, be taken up and laid away in their hearts and enshrined there; and the blessed Jesus, so long rejected and despised, shall now be raised to the mediatorial throne and crowned "Lord of all," while our happy people, on every hand, break forth in grateful strains, "Unto HIm that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father, to him, be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen!" The welcome of the spirit, the worship of God, the salvation of souls, and the conversion of the race so long and deeply buried under the worldliness of the whole earth shall now experience resurrection and find a glorious elevation and progress through all our borders. And surely, the life, and the peace, and the faith, and the prayer, and the liberality and the zeal of such a people could not be long confined within their own territorial limits. Through the laws of influence, by the promises and purposes of heaven, the Spirit would soon fling the benign power of the country over the nations of the earth. After a long, dark night the day would begin to break, the millenium to dawn; darkness would gradually disappear and our blessed christianity would shine around the earth, and hallow the nations, and brighten through following ages, brighter and brighter still to the end. Nor let thoughtless man suppose that all this secular and spiritual elevation of our country and the world must bound the power of her national rectitude. Far, far from it! Her very act of national consecration, by its legitimate, sacred force, in due time, shall work to take us, and our seed, and our seed's seed to the latest generation, high up to the land of the blest, and there fill us all with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and press out from every beating pulse of our immortality the hearty shout: "Everlasting thanks unto the Son of God, our Redeemer! Fulness of joy! and pleasures forevermore!!"

Oh the *power!* the *POWER* of national rectitude!! Secular and spiritual, social and universal, temporal and eternal!!

“ Seek ye first the kingdom of God.” This is the solemn word of Jesus Christ ; this moment most solemnly addressed to this country. How exalting the rewards of virtue ! How frivolous the objections of scepticism ! How sacred the obligations of conscience !

Oh my country ! I would to God that thou wouldest give heed to the responsibilities of thy day ! By all the hearts that beat in the nation, by all the capacities that work in the nation, by all the obligations that rest upon the nation, by all the felicities that can be enjoyed in the nation, by all the sufferings that may be endured by the nation, I conjure thee give heed to the responsibilities of this, thy day. By all the possible contents of immortality, both in this life and in that which is to come; by all the power of the Almighty to exalt or to degrade, both in time and through eternity, I entreat thee give heed to the responsibilities of this, thy day. By all the claims of the bleeding Jesus, by all the cries of a dying world, by all the glory of fraternal love, by all the pledges of a faithful God, I beseech thee give heed to the responsibilities of this, thy day. And, now, by all the voice of this most solemn epoch, which summons thee, by the acceptance or rejection of this appeal, to give shape, the best or the worst, not to our country’s present struggle only, but peradventure to the temporal and eternal destinies of her ever-following generations, I do implore thee, give heed to the responsibilities of this, thy day.

Do it, my countrymen ! Do it ! And we and ours shall serve God and man, and be good and happy, now and forever. Amen.

